



South Cheshire Advanced Motorcyclists Newsletter

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- Six of the best, Part 3: Chris Steel's tales of tours gone by
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- Aberystwyth revisited

If you have anything to contribute to the Newsletter email items to:

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Chairman's message

Hi all, hope you are all well.

Since last month's newsletter the combined Spring / Autumn course has come to a close. Good luck to everyone for your test and thanks to all the Observers who gave up their time so willingly in difficult circumstances. Thank you especially to the associates from the much disrupted Autumn course, we got there in the end!

The Summer course begins next week, unfortunately thanks to Covid we currently only have 6 associates booked in. Let's hope that as restrictions come to an end we'll get more enquiries from potential associates ready for Autumn.

Last week saw our first Observer Training day for quite some time with 11 Observers taking part. It was great to see Chris back on his new bike following his illness.

Observers are required to ride at a level which exceeds test standard. Of particular importance is positioning, since the Observer-follow position requires the Observer to be constantly in the 'wrong' position, so it's very easy to slip into bad habits without practice.

Having met at Costa we headed down the M6 and onto a circular route using A and B roads around Staffordshire to Haughmond Hill Cafe for breakfast. A very nice brew stop which we may well use again on a course. From there we headed up to Sleaf Airfield for another brew before the usual finish point of Broxton.

I'm a great believer in a group only being as good as the Observers and the quality of the advice, guidance and example they give, so it's only by constant practice that skills are maintained.

Thank you to everyone who attended, it seemed to be well received so I plan on arranging further Observer ride-outs on the last Sunday of each month. I also think there would be a lot to learn for the Associates to join in, so I'll be inviting them to join the rideout after they've done session 4.

However, these won't replace Dave Coomber's normal Sunday social rides, they'll still be happening but if any members wishes to join the end of month Observer rideout, please let me know in advance. You never know you might decide you fancy becoming an Observer yourself.

Dave Cox
Chairman



President's Message

I would like to start by thanking everyone for their kind wishes over the past few weeks, I am back at work and have resumed driving and riding, which is a relief to family members and Ian Cunningham as they no longer have to ferry me about.

I attended the Observers ride out on Sunday 27th June, it was nice to catch up with those present and have a ride out, thanks to Dave Cox for organising said event.

I have been sticking to my strict new healthy diet, salad with everything. I have given up coca cola and gone on to orange juice. I am having a 24 hour heart trace this month to see if I have any heart defects or anomalies which might have caused my stroke, so time will tell.

I am looking forward to getting back into the swing of things and being involved with group events again.

That is all from me for this month, short and sweet, so until next month, safe riding.

Chris Steel
President

What next for SCAM Members

Here's a reminder...

Members riding assessment

At a cost of £39. This involves a 60 minute check ride from an IAM Examiner to determine if you are still at test standard and with the possibility of achieving a First. No mentoring provided but extra sessions can be purchased at an additional cost.

IAM Observer

No cost. A good way of maintaining knowledge and skills but limited in its ability to enhance riding skills.

IAM Masters

£299 for which the candidate receives 6 x 90 minute sessions with a Mentor, extensive brief/debrief and test preparation. Further sessions can be purchased in batches of 3 at £75 with a retest upon failure.

Alternative routes to improvement

As an alternative for our members, SCAM supported by the Observer Team is to introduce an in-house training programme to provide a pathway to continuous personal development to provide the opportunity to maintain standards they achieved on passing their IAM Advanced test or to provide a further challenge to improve their riding.

Open to SCAM members only, the program is called South Cheshire Advanced Motorcyclists Continuous Personal Development Program and consists of two riding levels and a Masters Taster as follows:

SCAM Level 1 Award

SCAM Level 2 Award

SCAM Masters Taster

For more information, visit the SCAM website and see prices and full details, which are listed in the May Newsletter:

<https://www.southcheshiream.org.uk/chairmans-newsletters>

Haugsund is not a large ferry port like Dover or Hull, it is more like a fishing port, so there should not be any complicated routes to worry about, simple really, up the street to the first junction and turn right. Excellent we turned right straight into a carnival of marching bands. I looked for the banner saying "Norway welcomes SCAM" but I did not see it, nor the sign saying "Welcome big tipper Bailey". We had managed to travel five hundred yards and ground to a halt through no fault of our own. We waited and enjoyed the music and watched everyone having a good time. At last the final band passed and we were off again. We had about 213 miles to do, for 'distance no object Brady' that was the distance between toilet stops. For the rest of us it was going to be more interesting, the roads were quiet and the scenery breathtaking, we had only travelled about fifteen miles when we rounded a corner to see a fjord on our left and a large oil



rig having some work carried out on it. We stopped and took photo's, it is not something you see on the river weaver. We carried on and progress was slow as the scenery was amazing - as this was a holiday we had already decided to take things easy. So, having been riding for about 90 minutes it was time to stop for coffee and a bite to eat. We found a nice little cake shop that also had a coffee shop and waded in. The girl

seemed bemused by a group of bikers speaking in foreign tongue, but pointing at a cake is the same in any language. We had the mandatory toilet stop as well and set off again, the next stunning scene to greet us was a waterfall cascading down the mountain side. We had to take a picture of this, John noticed there was a gift shop in the lay-by and wandered over to have a look, the next thing he had purchased a reindeer skin to put on his bike seat, very fetching, I also attached the antlers to his screen to complete the remodelling of his bike, very fetching. Time as they say was moving on and at this rate we would never make it to Gol, so we decided no matter how stunning the scenery, we must press on to the hotel. I took the lead as my sat nav seemed to have more details than Ian's and we cranked it up. All of a sudden I was aware of the fact that I had no idea of the speed limit in Norway, there were obviously limits in towns which were indicated,

but once in their national speed limit, I had no idea at all. So I thought a good plan was to follow a local and see what speed they were doing, then when another local overtook follow them, this worked well until there were no more locals in front, doh!!! Then it was pick a speed. 70 was a good speed, although I am sure somewhere I had heard that 80kph was the limit - we blagged it I



thought, the snow was still on the hills and though the temperature was in the twenties at sea level as we climbed up the mountains it dropped to around seven, we were about twenty miles from Gol

when we came up behind a local on his Harley Davidson, I followed for a while then the man raised his left hand skyward, that's kind I thought and overtook. It was only when we reached the hotel that the others informed me he was pointing to a speed camera, doh!

On the outskirts of Gol John Bailey took the lead as he had put the hotel into his sat nav, I took up the rear. We were going to Pers Hotel. We passed through Gol and as I was looking around I saw the Pers hotel up a street on the left. Funny - could there be two hotels with the same name, John took us out of town and what seemed like a dirt track towards the railway station which was obviously where all the youths congregated, John stopped and was looking at his sat nav, according to it we had arrived, I chipped in with "I saw it back there", so I took the lead and we arrived at the hotel in good time, as we waited in reception to be allocated our rooms I was informed of the speed camera scenario, I was not too concerned as they had to find me first. Then the others informed me that the Norwegian police just sent the plate number to the UK police and obtain the address, then when I get home there is a fine from Norway waiting for me, excellent I thought - never mind we will cross that bridge when we get to it.

I was sharing with Ian, the room was typical hotel, nice, and up to the job. We all met down stairs and had a well deserved meal. Eating in Norway like everything else is expensive, you either go a la carte or pay a fixed price, eat as much as you can buffet. No prize's guessing which John Brady opted for, in fact we all opted for it as it was the cheapest option. Having had a good meal and a few drinks we had a walk round Gol. It seemed like a quiet place, in fact Crewe is a more lively, we returned back to the hotel and had another drink. There was music in the bar, and being a Saturday night it was the place to be. It was a good atmosphere we were relaxed not having to worry about work, the time passed quickly although it did not seem to because it was eleven at night and still daylight. Yes it does not go dark in the summer, we retired to our rooms to get a good nights rest in order to press on to Trondheim in the morning. I woke at three in the morning, looked out of the window and it was still daylight. Very strange. I went back to sleep.

Sunday morning, we met for breakfast and discussed the route for the day. We were going to cover 270 miles, we were going to encounter some tunnels on this trip and we had been advised to watch out for reindeer sheltering in them. John Bailey advised that they don't move for vehicles until you get out. I chipped in with probably because the locals s**g them John Bailey then christened me Moose s***ger. We went to settle our accounts and crack on, John Brady had forgotten his pin number and was on the phone to his wife Bev to see if she could tell him what it was. John had put the pin



number in code in his phone, but as he had more than one, he could not fathom out which pertained to which. Having had two wrong attempts it was vital he got it right. Then out of the panic he had a flash of inspiration and got the correct number, I handed in my key and the receptionist informed me I had a message. She passed me a piece of hotel paper with the message Mr Steel could you please contact the local police station and a number, for a moment my blood ran cold. Then I looked at the rest of the gang and collapsed in laughter I realised I had been set up, very funny, I will get my own back.

We travelled through some of the most spectacular scenery I have ever seen. The snow on top of the mountains was still feet deep, the colour of the water was sky blue, we had morning coffee at a ski resort and lunch in a spectacular town whose name I have forgotten, however it

was a good day.

As we neared Trondheim John Bailey had programmed the Scandic Residence hotel into his sat nav and took the lead. Where would we end up this time I thought, all was going well until Ian ahead of me suddenly stopped and started to back up, when he moved I saw the reason why, there was a chain across the road. It appeared that we had some how entered a



pedestrian only area. Never mind we crossed into the square via a small gap in the chain and crossed admiring the large monument in the middle. The hotel had no covered parking which concerned John Brady, but the rest of us were not too concerned. We parked round the back of the hotel and humped out stuff round to the front and up into our rooms. Again a pleasant room fit for purpose. We enjoyed our evening meal alfresco in the square where we had attempted to run over a few pedestrians, and once again took

a stroll round the city. This was a more busy place but being a Sunday fewer people out and about, we returned to the restaurant and had a few more drinks, we discussed the day and we all agreed that it had been a good day.

We were going to Moirana next a trip of some 302 miles where we were going to stay for two nights and visit the artic circle, it was off to bed and an early start.

To be continued...



Chris Steel

The next instalment of Neil Jewell's Honda VFR750F renovation

Now that the VFR750F paint has dried, its time to attack the known mechanical issues.

Bent clutch lever and rotten exhaust – the starter clutch also needs changing but I'll cover that later.

So first up is the bent clutch lever. No big thing and reasonably cheap to replace, but every cost will eat into the potential profit. So, I set about straightening it. Aluminium is a funny metal; it'll bend once then snap on the bend back, something to do with work hardening I believe. And having tried and failed numerous times before, I was determined to take my time and get this one right.



Gripping the lever in the vice, I applied the blow torch heat to where I wanted to bend the lever and used a piece of pipe to help with the bending. How much pressure on the pipe and how much heat was applied was anyone's guess. I figured that at some point with a bit of pressure on the pipe and enough heat, the lever would eventually move.



Onto the Exhaust pipe...

The silencer was completely shot. There were cracks all over the centre tube and more gas came out the side than the hole in the end, a quick eBay search turned up nothing. I decided to remake the middle bit, keeping only the inlet and end caps.



Getting the exhaust apart proved more difficult than it should have been. The original, aftermarket one was a Laser and even though totally rotten it was still a tough old beast. I drilled out the rivets that held the end caps in place, then hack sawed through the can at either end as it still wouldn't budge. Then, out came the angle grinder. I had to split the can lengthways and cut through both ends and then prise it all apart with a tyre lever. The pictures show the innards of the silencer. There was no wadding left and the perforated holes had all but gummed up solid. No wonder the gas wanted to escape in all other directions.





So I was left with the 2 end caps and a lot of mess. The mess went in the bin and I went on the interwebs to find exhaust part suppliers. I found a company that supplied 110mm internal diameter stainless tube, perforated stainless tube and exhaust wadding. Perfect.

After a bit of careful measuring and some careful cutting, I have the inner perforated tube just the right length so that when the end caps were pressed into the outer pipe it all clamped up together. Here are the pictures...



In the pictures you can see the perforated tube wrapped in the wadding, I slipped that inside the stainless tube and riveted it all together. I look forward to hearing how it sounds...

Neil Jewell

Aberystwyth loop, revisited

Ant Beeston and I had missed out on the SCAM 25th Anniversary Ride Out which covered this route, Richard Downes (who did make the anniversary trip) took us back over the circuit from Costa, to Aberystwyth and back.

Planning and sharing the route was achieved through **Basecamp**. Using this software, Richard was able to get the details of the route to us, for uploading onto our Sat Navs. Getting the maps onto the devices is a fairly simple process, while the planning laid down on Basecamp will remain a mystery* until it's experienced first hand (if you want to learn how to do something you have to do it).

There were a number of subplots: to kick off from an alternative Costa - spreading the financial trickle down across the region; to coordinate comms and navigation, and; to test our saddle fitness for a future multi-day tour.

The alternative Costa, off the A500 at Shavington proved to be a suitable place to launch a tour. It's well connected, has a spacious carpark and is next to an Esso petrol station as well as an on-the-go Sainsbury's.

Comms coordination can be a perennial problem. We managed to get all three Sena bluetooth intercom kits to talk. Over the course of the trip however, the three way connection was more off than on. Not sure of the reason. Devices competing for the bluetooth attention, perhaps? Three phones and three sat navs criss crossing the airways might be a problem. One day, we mused, we could get our heads together - perhaps in a Costa - and RTFM. **

The route was rich and varied. Outward to Aberystwyth was a classic route of A and B roads, mainly following the A495 to Oswestry then roughly following the 458 and 487 to the coast.

Aberystwyth is a rugged Welsh gem of a town, nestling at the craggy edge of Wales. It's a destination with an array of attractions in addition to the great roads in and out of town. Importantly, it is blessed with a well organised chippy that can deal with a seemingly long queue in minutes.



Homeward bound is the highlight of the trip, the road to Devils Bridge gives way to the B4574 - National Cycle Route 81 (as seen in the photo - three bikes, two blokes and an archway, just outside

Devil's Bridge). This is a challenging road of real character, requiring awareness and control - possibly the de facto destination of this loop, taking us through mountains and forests via the 483 to Welshpool.

By the time we were at Welshpool, we were grateful for flowing bends of the A roads that led to home - 200 miles of pretty intensive and challenging road. It's a full day.

As a ride-out, which crosses national borders (roadsigns in two languages), offers a coastal destination, varies between sweeping flowing roads and a tight and undulating mountain pass, it's a route to be recommended: a great precursor to longer touring and probably a classic.

*Training on Basecamp is currently underway for the uninitiated

**We did eventually master the comms, having referred to said manual. On a subsequent 4 day tour they behaved impeccably.

Ed Liptrot

Upcoming events, across the UK

There's an awful lot going on across the country for example, 11- 12 September:

Manchester Bike Show. The North of England's Premier Motorcycle Show - Bowlers Exhibition Centre, Trafford Park, Manchester, M17 1SN.www.manchesterbikeshow.com

To see a comprehensive list of events, follow this link to the Bennet website for month by month details: www.bennetts.co.uk/bikesocial/events